



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2015

No. 6

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM COTTON, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray. Eternal Spirit, You are sovereign and in good and in bad times our eyes turn to You. Fulfill Your purposes for our Nation and world by using our Senators as instruments of Your providence.

Lord, have Your way in our lives for You are the potter and we are the clay. Mold and make us as You desire, working for our good in all things for we are called according to Your purposes. Inspire our lawmakers to seek first Your guidance so that everything in time will fall into proper place. As they seek greater intimacy with You, empower them to relate honestly with themselves and one another.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 13, 2015.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable TOM COTTON, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COTTON thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will continue to debate the motion to proceed to the Keystone XL Pipeline bill, with the time equally divided until 12:30 p.m.

Some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle continue to filibuster the motion to proceed to the bill. All Senators should know that we will get on this bill today and begin the amendment process. We can do it the easy way or we can do it the hard way. Either we will get on it this afternoon by consent or shortly after midnight without consent. But we will get on it today.

It is surprising to me that some Democratic Senators are choosing to exercise their procedural rights in order to block their own colleagues from offering amendments to the bill, although at this point the only Senators who have filed amendments at the desk are Republican Senators.

I want to make it clear to everybody that we are committed to an open amendment process but not an open-ended one. So we are hopeful—I have read that Democrats have a number of amendments—that we will be given a chance to get on the bill and begin to offer amendments so the Senate can work its will.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, Democrats and Republicans cooperated last night to bring the Keystone Pipeline another step closer to construction. Thanks to that bipartisan cloture vote, the Senate can finally begin an open floor debate on this committee-vetted and approved legislation.

It is a debate many of us have actually been looking forward to—and not just because of the substance of what we are considering. But we have also been waiting a long time to have a debate where individual Senators actually matter again, which is why earlier I suggested that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle allow us to get on the bill and let us offer amendments. This is going to be an open process, but as I indicated, not an open-ended process.

This is a debate where Senators can offer amendments and have them considered by the Senators. It is a debate where Senators can make the voices of their constituents heard. That is just the kind of serious legislating many of us have been waiting a long time for, and the fact that we are finally seeing it today is a direct consequence of our constituents' calls for a functioning Congress. It is the latest example of the new Republican majority putting Congress back to work.

Getting Congress back to work means working to pass legislation that is good for jobs and for the middle class, and that is why we are focused on getting measures such as the bipartisan infrastructure bill over to the President's desk.

Even though he may not sign it—and we all know that he may not sign everything we pass—we are getting the Congress out of the business of protecting the President from good ideas. That is our commitment to the American people.

When it comes to the bipartisan Keystone bill, it is hard to see a serious reason why President Obama would

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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